

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner has refused to consider a German patent document cited in the information disclosure statement filed on September 15, 2006 because a concise statement of relevance was not provided. A concise statement of relevance was not provided because the document was cited in the search report issued on the PCT application upon which the present application is based. Consequently, a concise statement of relevance is not required in that the relevance of the document is set forth in the search report, a copy of which is of record in the present application. Therefore, an acknowledgement of consideration of the document is requested, and a PTO-1449 form listing same is being supplied herewith to facilitate such acknowledgement by the Examiner.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indicated allowability of claim 6 is noted with appreciation. Re-writing claim 6 in independent form is being reserved pending reconsideration of the art rejections discussed below.

Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to include features from now cancelled claim 4. The claims also have been amended to be more consistent with U.S. practice. For now, the reference numerals have been retained in the claims to facilitate the Examiner's examination of the claims, but they will be removed upon allowance of the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 in view of US 4,661,883 (herein "Nishizako"). This rejection is now moot in view of the amendment of claim 1 to include features of now cancelled claim 4.

Regarding claim 4, the Examiner relies on US 3,397,322 (herein "Wolgast"). Wolgast discloses a portable resistance spot welder. A spot welder is very far from a quick-acting valve and belongs to a different technical field.

According to the Examiner, Wolgast discloses an electronic switch 97 bridging a resistor 103. The Examiner acknowledges that Wolgast does not explicitly disclose a plurality of electronic switches connected in series in the form of a cascade, with the electronic switches each bridging a series resistor. In this respect, the Examiner cites Erickson which shows in Figure 4 two electronic switches Q1, Q2, each bridging a resistor R1, R2. The electronic switches, however, are controlled by a series of pulses 12. The purpose is to provide a multiple gain solenoid, wherein the plurality of resistors are configured in series with multiple transistors "for selecting or deselecting resistors when desiring finite control of the driver circuit" (column 2, lines 4 - 7). In contrast, claim 1 recites electronic switches that are driven simultaneously into the closing state when an input voltage ... falls below a given switching voltage. Therefore, even a combination of Wolgast and Erickson could not lead to the subject matter of amended claim 1.

Against original claims 1 and 4, the Examiner also has applied US 4,649,458 (herein "Arai"). Arai discloses control circuits for electromagnetic coupling apparatus and thus relates to a technical field rather far from the technical field of the present invention. The Examiner regards Q1 and Q2 of Arai as being electronic switches connected in series in the form of a cascade, with said electronic switches each bridging a series resistor (R1 and R2). It cannot be seen, however, how one can view Q1 as bridging R1 and Q2 as bridging R2. In contrast, Q1 forms with a capacitor C1 a timer TIM (column 3, line 68 - column 4, line 1). Q2 does not cooperate with any one of the resistors R1, R2. Further, the electronic switches Q1 and Q2 do not form a cascade.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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